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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6725
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3582

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 000486

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2016
TAGS: [OVIP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CARICOM](#) [VZ](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: FM EVASIVE ON DEMARCHE REQUEST REGARDING
AMBASSADOR BROWNFIELD

REF: STATE 60604

Classified By: DCM: ESWEENEY FOR REASONS 1.4 (b&d)

11. (C) In an April 21 meeting with Trinidad and Tobago,s Foreign Minister, Knowlson Gift, Ambassador Austin delivered reftel demarche requesting T&T to support the US protest against the Venezuela government-inspired attacks on US Ambassador Brownfield.

12. (C) Gift was emphatic in his response, no host government can turn its back on its responsibility to protect diplomats accredited to it. He recognized that five such attacks in the past seven months and three violent incidents in consecutive weeks clearly amounted to &targeting8. However, when Ambassador Austin suggested that Gift might raise his voice in protest against such behavior by the Venezuelan government, Gift was evasive, moving on to a different subject.

13. (C) COMMENT: Gift,s wariness was in line with past GOTT reluctance to become involved in the acrimonious exchanges between the US and Venezuela. This non-confrontational strategy may face a tougher test, when T&T participates with the US in the upcoming military exercises in what Chavez regards as Venezuela,s Caribbean area of influence. END COMMENT.
AUSTIN